

# What if...



## *...I will have more bills coming in?*

You may send us bills anytime; however, if we have not received any bills from you in 18 months then your claim will be closed. If you think that a year may pass between your treatments, it would be helpful to let us know so that we can keep your claim open. State law specifies that after 18 months, we must get special permission to reopen a claim.

## *...I have medical insurance?*

If you have private or public medical insurance (to include Medicare, Medicaid, etc.) or some other policy or program that will pay some of your bills, you will need to apply to them also. State law says that SOVA has to make sure that other available payment sources pay first and then we can consider paying the rest. That way the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund will not run out of money and more victims can be helped.

## *...my property was damaged in the crime?*

SOVA cannot pay for any property that is damaged, unless it is a medically necessary item such as a pair of eyeglasses or a walking cane. SOVA can pay for items that a doctor prescribes for recovery purposes, such as a wheelchair or crutches.

## *...I have been in a car accident?*

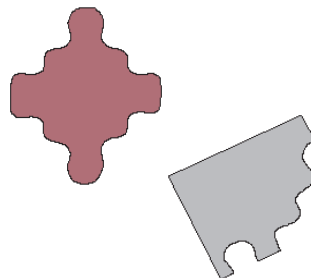
If the accident is considered criminal, that is, if the other driver is charged with a crime such as Hit and Run, Driving Under the Influence (DUI) or Reckless Homicide, then you may be eligible.

## *...I do not qualify?*

If you do not qualify, you will be notified that your claim has been denied and you will receive a packet of information describing how to appeal SOVA's decision.

## *...I wish to appeal a decision?*

If you wish to appeal, follow the instructions in the "appeal packet" and send it to SOVA within 30 days.



Revised 7/08

## Has a crime against you or a family member cost...

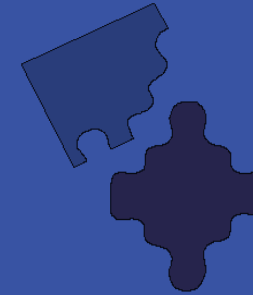
medical or dental care?

mental health counseling?

lost wages from missed work?

funeral or burial expenses?

*If you can answer "yes" to any question above, then we may be able to help you pick up the pieces...*



## State Office of Victim Assistance

Edgar Brown Building, Room 401  
1205 Pendleton Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

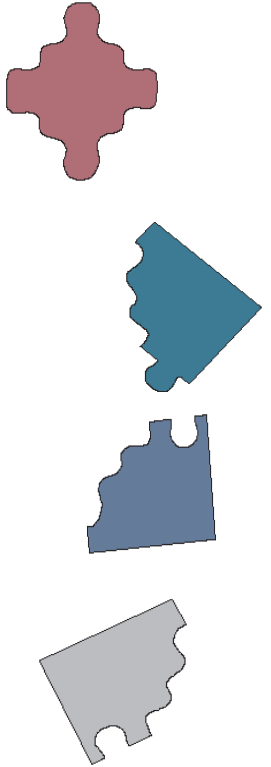
Phone: (803) 734-1900 ♦ Fax: (803) 734-1708  
Business hours victim line: (800) 220-5370

[www.sova.sc.gov](http://www.sova.sc.gov)

What you need to know about...

## Crime Victims' Compensation

*If you have been injured by violence, we may be able to help you put the pieces back together.*



### What is Crime Victims' Compensation Fund?

The South Carolina Crime Victims' Compensation Fund is a financial assistance program designed to help victims with expenses directly resulting from a crime that are not covered by other payment sources. It is administered by the State Office of Victim Assistance (SOVA), and is governed by state and federal laws. If you qualify for the program, it can pay certain costs for recovery treatment or burial arrangements up to the maximum allowed by law.

### Do I automatically get paid as a crime victim?

No. When the application is sent to SOVA, your eligibility is determined by laws that govern the compensation fund. SOVA tries hard to help an eligible victim qualify under the law.

### If I qualify, what can you pay?

SOVA can help with certain types of crime related costs. In every case, the expense has to be linked to losses from injury or death as a result of the crime.

**\*Up to a combined total of \$15,000 for:**

#### Medical Costs

- ◆ Doctor ordered medicine, equipment, supplies and treatment
- ◆ Dental or orthodontic work
- ◆ Other costs such as physical rehabilitation, reconstructive surgery, and transportation (mileage) to doctor appointments

#### Counseling (from a licensed professional)

- ◆ Counselor must confirm that trauma resulted from the crime
- ◆ 20 sessions spread over a period of time; or any number of sessions within a 180 day period from the first session; or 180 inpatient days at a mental hospital/facility, whichever amount you (the victim) need most
- ◆ Payment amount is on a set fee schedule which is similar to an insurance company scale

#### Burial bills for a deceased victim

- ◆ Reimbursement limit is \$4000
- ◆ Some funeral costs may not be covered
- ◆ Copy of Death Certificate is required

#### Lost Wages / Loss of Support

If you have not been able to work for at least two weeks in a row because of your injuries or to take care of a victim, then you may be eligible for Lost Wages or Loss of Support payments.

- ◆ You may be eligible if you are the victim or the victim's dependent or spouse
- ◆ You may be eligible to receive up to two-thirds of the average weekly wages
- ◆ Please call our office to see if you are eligible for Loss of Support payments

*If you (the victim) have more unpaid bills due to severe injuries after the maximum benefit of \$15,000 has been paid and extraordinary circumstances exist and are documented, then you may apply for additional funding.*

### What doesn't SOVA pay?

SOVA cannot pay for property damage (to include crime scene cleanup or items taken as evidence), any expenses related to going to court (to include legal fees or transportation), or "pain and suffering."

### When will I know if I qualify?

After you have sent us the application you will be notified by us that you are eligible or ineligible. If you are eligible you will receive a "Notice of Award" that will list how much SOVA is going to pay on the bills you submitted. Each time itemized bills are submitted, they are considered for payment. When these are paid, you will receive another "Notice of Award." You may receive many of them while your claim application is active.

### How do I get the money?

Checks for lost wages/support will be sent directly to you in lump sums. For medical, mental health and funeral expenses, you first have to send SOVA copies of bills that list how much you owe for each item after other payment sources (if you have them) have paid. If you also have receipts showing what you have paid out of pocket, you must submit them to be reimbursed. You are held responsible for your bills, but SOVA can pay doctors and counselors on your behalf, once you have been declared eligible. SOVA will pay what it can to the facilities or businesses that have given you medical or funeral assistance. If you have already paid for medically necessary items such as medication or replacement eyeglasses, SOVA can repay you what you spent on them. Any remaining portion that SOVA cannot pay will be billed to you by the places that helped you.

### Do family members qualify?

Sometimes. If one of your immediate family members is a victim, you may be able to get counseling or receive part of your wages if you have to stay out of work to take care of him/her. If you paid the funeral bill for a family member who was a victim, you may be able to get back up to \$4,000.

### Is SOVA in the same office as my advocate?

No. Your victim advocate is probably in your own county or community. SOVA is a state level governmental office located in Columbia, and is part of the Governor's Office. But, SOVA still works closely with advocates, service providers, and others who help victims across the state.

### Will law enforcement be involved with my claim?

Yes. Law enforcement will be contacted to confirm the facts of the case and provide additional information. Your claim cannot be processed without a copy of the law enforcement incident report.

### Is the program paid for by taxpayers?

No. This program was set up by state laws and takes money from persons who are convicted of criminal offenses and puts it into a special account for crime victims. A similar federal program also gives South Carolina some money for this fund. This is why the program must follow both state and federal laws for awarding the money to victims.